



Above, the Washau Wolves star hitter Bill Hummings gets a base hit in the game against Las Vegas. Below, the Nellis Honor Guard presents the colors during the opening ceremonies May 19.



Nellis hosts world class event

**By Tech. Sgt. Gayle Barajas
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Children and adults from across the state filled Nellis' track field each bearing smiles from ear to ear as they laughed, talked and anxiously waited for the announcer to blare their names over the loud speaker.

The Special Olympics-Nevada Summer 2000 Games started May 19, with the final sporting event, the swimming competition, concluding Saturday. Closing ceremonies were held Sunday.

"When Nellis was asked if we'd be willing to host this event, we readily agreed," said Col. Andrew S. Dichter, 99th Air Base Wing commander.

"This important event provides Nellis with an opportunity to give back to the local community and the State of Nevada for their terrific support of our base," said Col. Dichter. "Even more importantly, Special Olympics is a truly worthwhile cause that greatly benefits the special children who compete and benefit greatly from the competition."

"This weekend I witnessed athletes of all abilities competing in the spirit of true Olympic sportsmanship—people not allowing their limitations to dictate their desires but living life at its fullest," said Chief Master Sgt. Ike Moore, 57th Wing command chief master sergeant.

"For me, this was truly a humbling experience," said Chief Moore. "It's occasions like this that continually renew my faith in humanity."

This year's Special Olympic games hosted more than 300 athletes repre-

senting seven programs in Nevada. The competitors ranged in age from eight to 80. The athletes competed in track events, swimming relays, basketball and softball games.

"I saw more than 400 volunteers from across Team Nellis come together with local businesses and civic organizations to make the Special Olympics-Nevada a world-class event for participants and families," said Brig. Gen. David Moody, 57th Wing commander.

Team Nellis volunteers helped organize sporting events, assisted competitors with registration, coached teams, escorted athletes to their sporting events, decorated facilities and awarded medals to participants.

"My sincere thanks and appreciation goes out to all the volunteers, especially the members of Team Nellis, for giving their time, energy and talents to make an event of this magnitude such a tremendous success," said Col. Dichter.

"The theme for Special Olympics Incorporated this year is 'inspire greatness,' and ours at Special Olympics-Nevada is 'help inspire greatness,'" said Ms. Sheryl Parks, interim executive director of Special Olympics-Nevada.

"This is the relationship I see between Nellis and Nevada Special Olympics. Nellis is helping us inspire greatness," said Ms. Parks.

For more information about Special Olympics-Nevada and to volunteer to assist the local chapter, call 474-0690.



Above, Las Vegas runner Danny Cooper sprints toward the finish line during the 100- yard dash Saturday. Below, Danny Cooper lights the Olympic torch. The eternal flame of the torch symbolizes the undying spirit of Olympic athletes everywhere.



Photos by Staff Sgt. Molly Gilliam, Staff Sgt. Jim Bryan and Senior Airman Kenny Kennemer

Above, Chief Master Sgt. Michael Fusco, 99th Air Base Wing command chief master sergeant, gets a salute from Reno Sparks gold medal winning swimmer Maggie Schultz during the awards ceremony Saturday. Right, Washau Wizards Tomeka Conway shoots a 15-foot jump shot during the championship game against Las Vegas.

